

MILWAUKEE PARENTAL CHOICE PROGRAM (MPCP) INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

Bulletin 01-01

Revised January 2015

Student Application Information

This bulletin applies to applications for the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) or “Choice.”

The following information is intended to assist the school administrator or their designee as they are reviewing a student application before submitting it to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). School administrators/designees are reminded that their signature at the bottom of the application attests that he or she has closely reviewed the application and believes the student is eligible for the Choice program. This bulletin includes information on the required information in the Choice application. All applications require a complete application, an income eligibility determination from either the Department of Revenue (DOR) or using DPI’s Family Income Eligibility documentation if the student is not continuing, and residency documentation. The income eligibility determination is required in the first year a pupil applies to a Choice school or if the student has a break in enrollment at a MPCP school (attends a public school, charter school, home schooling or non-MPCP private school on the prior 2nd Friday in January or 3rd Friday in September count date). Students continuing in the program or students that had an eligible application and were on a Choice waiting list in the prior school year are not required to provide income documentation. Please see the income documentation bulletin (Bulletin 04-02) and the residency documentation bulletins (Bulletin 04-01) at http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/sms_forms. See further information on the application process and rules in the documents “Open Application Periods-General Rules” and “Open Application Period-Process.” These documents are available at http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/sms_pscp_registration.

The official application form must be filled out completely, accurately and legibly with required signatures. There are two applications available:

- one for continuing students that were an eligible Choice student counted on the previous count date or on a Choice waiting list after the 2nd Friday in January in the previous school year; or
- an application for students new to the Choice program.

Schools are required to keep and file the original completed application, including all income documentation, if applicable, and residency documentation. It is recommended that schools use the Student Application checklist available at http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/sms_forms to ensure that each student file includes all required information.

1. The Choice administrator or designee with responsibility for accepting student applications must fully understand the information needed on the application form. He or she should review the application with the parent or guardian and check that it is properly and completely filled out.

2. Students with the same parents (by birth, marriage or adoption) or legal guardians who reside at the same address may use one application. A separate application does not need to be completed for each child if both students are new Choice students or both students are continuing Choice students. However, if one student in the family is new to the Choice program, he/she will need a new student application. If the other student in the family is a continuing Choice student, that student will need a continuing student application. If the student is a foster child or in the kinship care program, a separate application should be completed for each pupil.
3. You may use a school stamp or type in the school name on the application where appropriate. All signatures must be handwritten in ink. Pencil should not be used on the application.
4. Copy the application (front and back) as needed for distribution. No information on the student application form should be removed or otherwise changed by the school as all the information asked for is important. The top section of the application asks for the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) names and address.
 - Make sure the student's home address is completely filled out with the city and zip code and that the student resides in the City of Milwaukee for the MPCP. See the MPCP Residency Documentation bulletin at http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/sms_forms for the requirements to verify residency.
5. If the applicant is completing a new student application, the top section also requires the marital status, family size and the names of the individuals included in the family. (Parent means a biological parent, a parent by adoption or a step-parent that resides in the same household as the student applicant). Parents who do not reside in the household should not be included on the application or in the family size unless they are on active military duty. The school should complete the following for new student applications:
 - Ensure that if the DOR income determination process will be used that all parents/guardians listed on the application have provided their Social Security Number or Taxpayer ID Number. If the DOR income determination process will not be used, the DPI Family Income Eligibility Form must be completed.
 - Ensure that parents/guardians have checked the box indicating whether or not they are married.
 - Ensure all family members are listed on the application and the number of individuals equals the number listed for family size. Family size includes parents/guardians, student applicant(s), and other children who share at least one parent by birth, adoption or by a parent's current marriage who reside in the same household as the student applicant. If the child is in kinship or foster care, the family size should be 1, with only the student included.
6. The middle section of the student application form asks for information about the student(s). There are also additional spaces on the second page if more students are applying on the same application than the number of spaces available on the first page.
 - Confirm the student's date of birth is listed. For K4, K5 and first grade applicants, the student must have been born on or before: (a) September 1, 2011 for K4; (b) September 1, 2010 for K5; or (c) September 1, 2009 for first grade.
 - Confirm the correct grade level is entered for each student.

- Make sure gender, ethnicity, and race are selected for each student on the application. *Both race and ethnicity questions should be answered.* (Hispanic/Latino parents should select “Hispanic/Latino” ethnicity and should also select at least one of the race choices.)
 - Continuing students must indicate either: (a) the Choice school where the student attended on the prior count date; or, (b) the school at which the student was on the Choice waiting list in the prior year.
7. The bottom section of the Choice application is for signatures. The name of the administrator or designee signing the application should also be printed next to the signature. For new student applications only, the administrator or designee must also identify the method used to determine income eligibility.
- Please note that the application will not be considered eligible by DPI staff if both signatures (parent/guardian and administrator or their designee) are not on the application and dated, as the signatures attest that the information is true, correct, and complete. The parent/guardian signature and date signed may not be added after the open application period closes in which the application is received. The Administrator/designee approval and signature must occur within 60 days of the date application is received, or prior to random selection, whichever is sooner.
 - Applications may only be received during a school’s open application periods as reported on the school’s notice of intent to participate form. The date the application was received should be completed as soon as the school receives the application. The date may not be added after the open application period in which the application is received.
 - Administrators/designees must also indicate for new applications whether they determined eligibility using DPI’s income determination process or if eligibility was determined by the DOR. Please see the Income Documentation bulletin (Bulletin 04-02) at http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/sms_forms for more information.
8. For your reference the income levels to qualify for the program (300% of the poverty level) are printed on the back (page 2) of the new student application. Students in grades 9-12 may be charged tuition, in an amount determined by the private school, if the student’s family income **exceeds** 220% of the federal poverty level. These income levels are also printed on the back of the new student applications. A Tuition Income Determination form is available at http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/sms_forms and may be used to determine if continuing choice students in grades 9-12 may be charged tuition.
9. The bottom section of the Choice application for all student applications is for signatures and for the administrator or designee to confirm residency has been verified. (See the MPCP Residency Documentation bulletin at http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/sms_forms for the requirements to verify residency.)
10. If the school has more eligible applicants than seats available, the school must perform a random selection to determine who will receive the seats. Preference may be given to: (a) pupils continuing in the choice program at the private school; (b) siblings of pupils who attended the private school in the prior year or have been accepted to the school for the 2015-16 school year; and, (c) pupils continuing in the choice program who attended another private school in the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP or statewide), MPCP or the Racine Parental Choice Program (RPCP) in the 2014-15 school year. The school must decide which preferences will be given to applicants and apply the preferences consistently. Determining a child’s eligibility for the Choice program and

determining automatic preference for enrollment in a random selection once they have been ruled eligible are two separate processes.

11. Student eligibility for the Choice program is determined based on the supporting documentation received during the open application period when a student submits his or her Choice application. In order to be eligible to participate in the program, a Choice school administrator/designee must verify that the student meets the residency requirements during that open application period. Further, in the first year a pupil applies to a Choice school or if the student has a break in enrollment at a MPCP school (attends a public school, charter school, home schooling or non-MPCP private school on the prior 2nd Friday in January or 3rd Friday in September count date), the school must verify income eligibility. A Choice student application for students continuing in the program must be submitted annually and at the time a student transfers from one MPCP school to another MPCP school to verify residency.
12. Application corrections: Any corrections to the application are to be made with a “~~strike-through line~~” and initialed. The school administrator/designee must initial all changes made to the application and must have written documentation to support the change. In addition, both the administrator/designee and the parent/guardian must initial any change made to the parent’s(s’)/guardian’s(s’) name(s), marital status, family size, names of family members parent/guardian’s(s’) signature, date application received, and the date the parent/guardian signed the application. Any applications corrected with “white-out” will be ineligible for payment.

Corrections to the following may not be made after the open application period in which the school receives the application:

- Adding parent/guardian signature and/or date signed to the application or any form.
 - Adding the date application received.
 - Changes that require additional supplemental documentation since all documentation must be received in the same open application period in which the school received the application.
 - Any changes that result in the application being ineligible due to residency, income or age requirements.
 - Any changes to the alternative residency form.
13. DPI Income Forms corrections: Any corrections to the income forms are to be made with a “~~strike-through line~~” and initialed. Both the administrator/designee and the parent/guardian must initial all changes made to the income forms.
 14. Random selection, if needed, must occur within one week of the close of the open application period and prior to the count date, if applicable. Applicants must be notified, in writing, within 60 days of submission of their application, whether they are accepted or not accepted in the MPCP at the school.
 15. Schools are required to retain a copy of the letter accepting or denying the application, the original paper application, and all supporting documentation received even if the application is not accepted or if the pupil declines a seat when offered. Do not destroy the original application.